(c) whether Governmeilt have received any communication from Government of Pakistan with regard to number of Indian prisoners of war in Pakistani jails;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government are taking the response of Government of Pakistan as positive; and

(f) if not, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERN ANDES): (a) and (b) 54 Indian PoWs are beloved to be in Pakistani jails. The Government has consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. During the Agra Summit on 17.7.2001 also, Prime Minister urged the Pakistani President to take urgent and purposeful action towards the release of these PoWs,

(c) to (f) Pakistan has never acknowledged the presence of any PoW in its custody. Following the Agra Summit in July this year, Government of Pakistan reportedly conducted another search for Indian PoWs but again reiterated that there was no Indian PoW in Pakistani jails. Government would continue to take up this issue with the Government of Pakistan.

Statement made by Shahi Imam of Delhi

2482. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:
SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen news-item titled "Shahi Imam criticised by lawyers Azmi remark" appearing in the Asian Age, New Delhi on 24th October, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid have made irresponsible and derogatory statements recently; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken or is proposed to be taken against him in the national interest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It was reported in the news-item in question that "The National Federation of Indian Women" and the lawyers under the banner "social jurist" criticized and condemned the remarks alleged to have been made by the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Delhi.

(c) and (d) Delhi Police have referred the matter to the Prosecution Branch of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi for its legal opinion as to whether the remarks alleged to have been made by the Shahi Imam constituted a cognizable offence.

Legislation to Pay Compensation to Victims of Terrorism

†2483. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the present cirumstances Central Government propose to frame a legislation to pay compensation to victims affected by the terrorism;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that no amount is payable by the insurance companies to the claimant in case of death due to war, riots, murder or terrorist attack; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government with regard to framing of this legislation and by when said legislation is likely to be implemented?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.